



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

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COUNTY STARTS AERIAL LARVICIDE DROPS TO COMBAT MOSQUITOES *Mosquito-Breeding Season Is Here, West Nile Virus Is a Concern*

County Vector Control has started monthly aerial larvicide applications to local wetlands to reduce mosquito breeding and the risk of West Nile virus (WNV) now that the mosquito-breeding season is here. This year the County will target 39 key breeding areas.

"We've already had one bird test positive for West Nile virus in San Diego County this year," said Supervisor Greg Cox. "The County is proactively treating mosquito-breeding areas to reduce the potential spread of West Nile virus."

The larvicide granules used to control the mosquito population contain a naturally occurring bacterium and dissolve in water. The larvicide is not toxic to humans and does not pose a risk to wildlife or the environment.

"In addition to the aerial applications, the County also reduces the risk of WNV by treating mosquito-breeding areas from the ground and giving away free mosquito-eating fish," said Gary Erbeck, director of the Department of Environmental Health.

County residents can fight against disease-carrying mosquitoes by removing standing water around their homes where mosquitoes breed, making sure window and door screens are in good condition, and using insect repellent containing DEET, Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus or Picaridin.

"Stay inside when mosquitoes are most active, at dawn and dusk, and wear long sleeves and pants when outdoors," said County Public Health Officer Dr. Nancy Bowen.

Horses and certain species of wild birds are particularly susceptible to WNV. There is a vaccination available for horses, according to County Veterinarian Dr. Nikos Gurfield. WNV rarely infects other wild and domestic animals, including cats and dogs.

Last year in San Diego County, there were no locally-acquired human cases of WNV. However, 162 dead birds tested positive for the virus, an all-time high in San Diego County.

For more information about WNV or to report dead birds, call 1-888-551-INFO (4636) or visit www.SDFightTheBite.com.

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